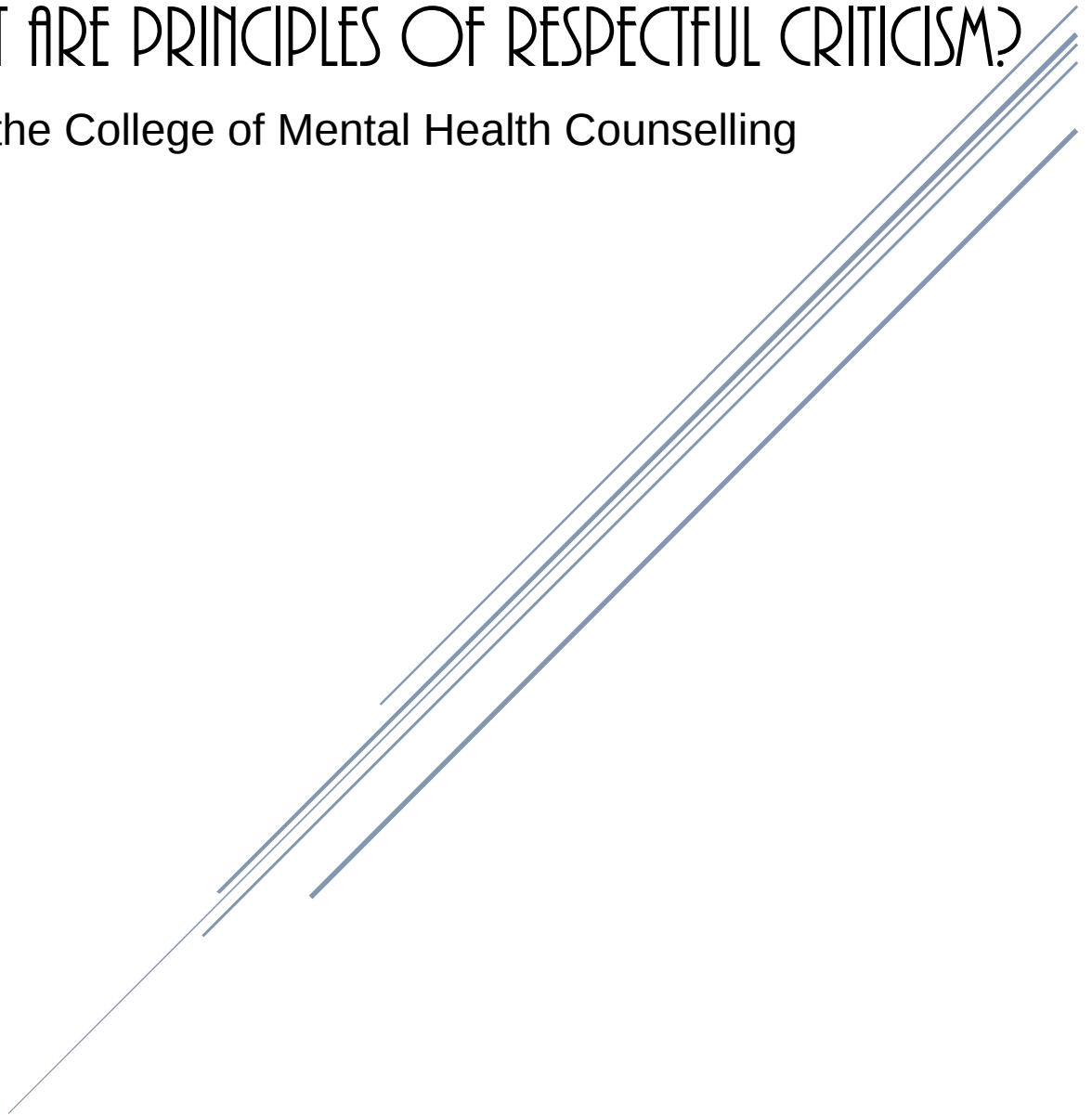


WHAT ARE PRINCIPLES OF RESPECTFUL CRITICISM?

from the College of Mental Health Counselling



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How to offer criticism in a way that is most likely to be accepted, is the challenge of people in all walks of life and relationships. This short list is intended to be for discussion purposes only. The essential underlying value is the equal worth and dignity of every human being and the belief that everyone deserves to be treated with respect. My values are derived from the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

1. Seek permission: "Do you mind if I....."
2. Inquire what it was like to hear the criticism: "What was it like to hear me say that?"
3. Avoid frequent criticism unless it is the purpose of the group.
4. Avoid using anger with criticism.
5. Distinguish hate and passion: "I feel strongly because I care."
6. State your intention to be helpful: "If my words are unhelpful, disregard them....."
7. State your criticism as your opinion: "What I am about to say is my opinion or belief."
8. Avoid dominating or speech-making, yelling, name-calling, demeaning or humiliating language, sarcastic put down's, angry physical actions, and language perceived as offensive.
9. Intend your criticism to be constructive rather than judgmental or condemning or to punish or emotionally hurt the person.
10. If possible, avoid criticizing the personal integrity or character of the person who is present.
11. When raising issues of personal integrity, tell the person you want to challenge their standard of values, and ask permission to proceed: "Do you mind if I raise an issue about your standard of values?"
12. Express your value for the other person's opinion or response by reflecting it back as sincerely and accurately as you can: "Do you mind if I tell you what I think I heard you say?"